

**PSYCHIATRIC NURSE I**  
**PSYCHIATRIC NURSE II**

**Class No. 004524**  
**Class No. 004525**

**DEFINITION:**

Under general supervision, to provide professional nursing care to mentally ill and emotionally disturbed patients in county mental health facilities and clinics; and to perform related work.

**CLASS CHARACTERISTICS:**

The county's mental health services include clinics and facilities that provide services on an in-patient and outpatient basis, and provide diagnosis, treatment, crisis intervention and community education. Positions in the psychiatric nurse series are located at the San Diego County Psychiatric Hospital, Loma Portal Mental Health Facility and psychiatric clinics throughout the county. Incumbents work in interdisciplinary treatment teams composed of licensed medical and mental health professionals.

**Psychiatric Nurse I:**

This is the entry-level class for the series. Incumbents of positions in this class are qualified registered nurses learning to perform the full range of mental health nursing duties for clients with cases of limited complexity involving chronic mental disorders.

**Psychiatric Nurse II:**

This is the journey level in the series. Incumbents of positions in this class are qualified registered nurses with responsibility for performing the full scope of mental health nursing duties within their competence, scope of practice and established protocols.

Classes in this series are distinguished from other nurse classes by the specialization in psychiatric nursing. Other nursing classes typically are concerned with the physical health of clients.

**EXAMPLES OF DUTIES:**

Conducts intake assessments through interviews of patients, relatives and others to gather case history; makes diagnosis regarding medical and emotional status of patient and recommends treatment options; consults with psychiatrist, psychologists and other mental health staff in designing appropriate treatment plans for clients; assists the client in understanding the nature of emotional disturbances and to understand and accept the need for treatment; initiates and conducts individual and group therapy sessions; administers, and notes reactions to, psychotropic drugs and other medications; may train or assist in the training of nursing and other mental health staff; may prepare written psychiatric evaluations of a client's condition and may recommend court ordered hospitalization; may testify in court as to the client's mental and physical condition; assists in maintaining a safe and secure environment for staff and patients; and such other duties as may be assigned.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

**Knowledge of:**

- Professional nursing principles, procedures, and techniques used in the care and treatment of psychiatric patients.

- Social, psychological and physical factors of mental and emotional disorders.
- Medical and psychological terminology.
- Medications, including psychotropic drugs, and effects on psychiatric patients.
- Control, preparation and administration of medications.
- State of California laws and regulations for the nursing profession.
- Regulations pertaining to psychiatric nursing and the treatment of the mentally and emotionally disturbed patient.
- Theories, principles and techniques of group and individual psychotherapy.
- Organization and procedures of mental health treatment facilities and the use of multi-disciplinary treatment teams.
- Symptoms and behavior patterns of emotionally disturbed and mentally ill patients;
- Medical and psychiatric emergency procedures.
- Community resources.

#### **Skills and Abilities to:**

- Apply professional nursing care principles and procedures in the evaluation and treatment of psychiatric patients.
- Develop interpersonal therapeutic relationships with psychiatric patients.
- Keep accurate written charts and records of patient activities and progress.
- Comply with laws, rules, regulations, protocols and procedures, including security requirements, applicable to psychiatric facilities.
- Use professional judgement to ascertain and to apply appropriate intervention techniques with patients in crisis.
- Work cooperatively with medical and mental health professionals in a multi-disciplinary treatment setting.
- Conduct and assist in formal and informal, individual and group counseling.
- Communicate effectively, orally and in writing, with patients, their families and fellow staff members.
- Participate with in-service training and education.

#### **EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE:**

Education, training or experience, which clearly demonstrate possession of the knowledge, skills and abilities stated above. Examples of qualifying education/experience are:

##### **Psychiatric Nurse I:**

Experience or coursework in psychiatric and/or correctional nursing is highly desirable.

##### **Psychiatric Nurse II:**

At least two (2) years of full-time registered nursing experience; OR, eighteen (18) months of full-time registered nursing experience in a psychiatric facility.

#### **SPECIAL LICENSES, NOTES OR REQUIREMENTS:**

##### **License/Certificates:**

Valid Registered Nurse license issued by the State of California. Failure to maintain such license will be cause for dismissal.

Valid CPR certification required by the time of appointment, and must be maintained throughout appointment.

##### **Notes:**

May be subject to verbal and physical abuse from patients and exposed to contagious disease.

**Character:**

Applicants must have a reputation for honesty and trustworthiness. Prior to appointment, candidates offered employment in programs that deal with patients and/or drugs will be subject to a limited security clearance investigation performed by the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS).